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People & Places



A horse, left, enjoys the old-time feed and ambience of Old Desert at Pioneer Trail State Park. The blacksmith's shop, below, is a replica of one in Brigham City, Box Elder County. Charles Rich home, bottom, originally stood in Centerville.



OLD DESERT

COME FEEL 'AT HOME' WITH PIONEER PAST IN PARK WITH VIVID MEMORY

By Susan Lyman-Whitney
Deseret News staff writer

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No one lives here now. It's been more than 100 years since Charles Rich built the three-room adobe house for two of his wives, 100 years since they worked and slept and raised their children within these walls.

Nothing in the tidy house gives a hint, however, that the people who built it died decades ago.

When you walk into a home at Pioneer Trail State Park, you are supposed to feel like you are back in the 1850s. So it is with the Rich home.

On the white mantle shelf, two candles stand half burned. A Bible lies nearby as though someone might have been up late last night, reading and praying.

On the window sill a geranium blooms. The soil around it smells damp, freshly watered. The lumpy bed in the corner looks hastily made. There is spinning left on the wheel.

You can almost believe Sarah Rich started that spinning and that she'll soon be back to this little room — lugging a pail of milk, or a basket of vegetables, or a sleepy baby to deposit in the cradle before she sits at the wheel again.

A long dusty road runs past the house. When the front door is open to the morning sun, you can hear meadow larks and the livestock in the barnyard — a high-pitched piglet and a snorting horse. In the evening, the insects whir in the tall grass outside.

From the doorway you can lift your eyes to the eastern mountains and see nothing but scrub oak. No telephone lines, no highways, no high-rises, just oak.

Pioneer Trail Park, at the mouth of Emigration Canyon, is one of the best places in the state to see the world the way the pioneers saw it. But not all that many Utahns

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